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## THE SEFER HA-GALUY.

I COULD have wished, for many reasons, that the task of proving the *Sefer Ha-Galuy* not Saadyah's had been undertaken by some one else. It has so often been my lot to fail to persuade when another would have won the case with a tithe of the evidence. Hence I look forward with little confidence to the result of this paper. It will in any case have been a pleasure to have passed some time in the society of Saadyah, one of the profoundest thinkers, most elegant writers, and most upright leaders that the Jewish race has produced, and to have endeavoured to clear his memory from what must be regarded as a serious blot upon it.

The statements about Saadyah's writings are based on independent examination of the originals, so far as they are at present accessible; the Commentary on the Proverbs forms vol. VI of the *Œuvres de Saadyah*, now publishing in Paris; the remaining volumes of this series have also been of use. For the Commentary on the *Sefer Yetsirah* I have used the edition of M. Lambert, Paris, 1891; for the *Imānūt* that of Landauer, Leyden, 1880; the single reference to his translation of the Pentateuch is from Walton's Polyglot; that to his translation of Job from the edition of Dr. John Cohn, Altona, 1889. Of Saadyah's life the best account is that by Grätz, *Geschichte der Juden*, vol. V, 3rd ed.; I have in almost all cases verified the citations on which his assertions are based. To Dr. Neubauer's extraordinary command of Jewish literature I am deeply indebted; his *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles*, moreover, place at the disposal of the student of Jewish history a collection of materials which render it possible to tread safely on ground which, before their publication, was often dangerous. However, the documents collected by Dr. Harkavy in Part V of his *Studien und Mittheilungen*, St. Petersburg, 1891, give us the surest means of settling the question, and though the result of the present paper is at variance with Dr. Harkavy's, I hope I may be permitted to admire the industry and ingenuity which his work displays.

The *Sefer Ha-Galuy*, ostensibly by Saadyah, has recently come into prominence in connexion with the Ben-Sira controversy. The form in which it is published renders it, unfortunately, inaccessible to

many of those whom that controversy interests; for not many can read the Jewish Arabic of the original, and the Hebrew translation, which is the work of a relation of the discoverer Firkovitch, misrepresents it seriously in several places. For this no one is to blame. The first translator of such a document cannot be expected to get everything right; and the editor could not have foreseen that the day might come when it would be of importance that the book should be correctly rendered. Yet had the *Sefer Ha-Galuy* been published in German or English, it is possible that there would have been no Ben-Sira controversy. Its readers, instead of thinking it a witness for the authenticity of the Cairene Ecclesiasticus, might have been put on their guard against taking such a view.

Let us first consider the *a priori* likelihood of Saadyah having possessed the original Hebrew of Ben-Sira. The well-known *Kitāb Al-Fihrist*<sup>1</sup> was composed in the year 377 A. H. (987 A. D.), at a time when many persons who had known Saadyah were still alive<sup>2</sup>. Its author obtained a list of the Jewish Scriptures from "a learned Jew," and a list of Christian Scriptures that had been translated into Arabic from "Yunus the Priest." Between these two lists the author of the *Fihrist* has inserted a catalogue of the chief works of Saadyah himself, probably obtained from the same Jew who gave him the list of the Jewish Scriptures; Saadyah being, according to this authority, absolutely unequalled as a writer of Hebrew, and the only Jewish writer of Arabic works on religion who is worth mentioning. We are therefore justified in concluding that the Jew who supplied the author of the *Fihrist* with his information was either a pupil of Saadyah, or at any rate a follower of Saadyah. Now the list of Jewish Scriptures contains the Canonical Books, with their Hebrew names, none of which offers the slightest difficulty in identification. It only adds besides the *Mishnah*, "a vast work ascribed to Moses, written partly in Chaldee, partly in Hebrew" (doubtless the word *Mishnah* was meant by this authority to include the *Gemara*), and the *Haftaroth*, "which are selections from the Sacred Books." Clearly then this follower of Saadyah, writing forty-five years (at most) after Saadyah's death, knows nothing of so important a monument of Hebrew as "the Wisdom of Ben-Sira."

But in the list of *Christian* Scriptures translated into *Arabic* the "Wisdom of Huwaisi'a, son of Sirak"<sup>3</sup> figures. What is remarkable about this title is that whereas the Arabic translation is certainly made from Syriac, the name of the author is altered to suit the

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Flügel, Rödiger and Müller, see p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> See the editor's note, and Jawaliki's *Mu'arrab* near the end.

Greek text; and we learn from the *Fihrist* that this alteration goes back to the middle of the tenth century. As early then as that time, the difference between the two primary versions had attracted attention.

It might almost seem as if the author of the *Fihrist* had purposely told the world that in the tenth century the Christians had the wisdom of Ben-Sira, whereas the Jews had not. Let us now hear a witness of the early twelfth century. This is the author of Chronicle No. VI in Neubauer's first collection, whose date is fixed by the editor on what seem good grounds<sup>1</sup>. He is deeply interested in literary history, and gives much information about the writers of the Jews. But of Ben-Sira he only knows through the Greek translation; for he calls Ecclesiasticus by what is evidently an ingenious Hebrew rendering of the name by which it is known in the Christian Church<sup>2</sup>; he calls the author by a modification of his Greek name; and he gives the Greek form of the name Onias<sup>3</sup>. Clearly then this writer knows as little of a Hebrew Ecclesiasticus as the authority of the *Fihrist*. Let us now consider what the *Sefer Ha-Galuy* says about Ben-Sira<sup>4</sup>.

"The Open Book" (as its title signifies, the words being taken from Jeremiah xxxii. 11) professes to be the Preface to a second edition of a work in ten chapters<sup>5</sup>, of which the chapter dealing with Saadyah's autobiography was the most important. It was in Hebrew, was cut up into verses, pointed and accented. As it met with unfavourable criticism, Saadyah, if the Preface is to be believed, reissued it with an Arabic translation and Preface. Only the Preface and the first few lines of the text are preserved.

It is very clear that the author of this Preface is greatly interested in Ben-Sira's book. At the commencement he justifies his own publication of a book on the ground that books had been produced by Ben-Sira, Eleazar Ben 'Ira, the five Hasmonoids, and the people of Kairawan in the author's own time. Presently he justifies the

<sup>1</sup> Loc. cit., xxi, n. 4.

<sup>2</sup> ספר המקדיל; p. 167, l. 7 from the end.

<sup>3</sup> חזקוני *ibid.* = 'Ḥniov. The name is known to the Talmud in this form also; the unpublished Dictionary of R. Tanchum has an interesting article on it.

<sup>4</sup> Mas'udi (who was personally acquainted with Saadyah, but gets his facts from a Karaite), after mentioning that the LXX had often been translated into Arabic, speaks of the Jews as possessing twenty-four Hebrew books, and so implies the same as the author of the *Fihrist*. *Bibl. Geogr. Ar.*, VIII, 112, 113.

<sup>5</sup> In the list in the *Fihrist*, where a work in ten chapters is mentioned, for *amthāl* read *imānāt*.

punctuation and accentuation of his own book on the ground that these other books had been pointed and accented by their authors. And finally before concluding, he treats his readers to some *morceaux choisis* of these books, by far the largest number of quotations being taken from Ben-Sira. Now if the contents of the *Sefer Ha-Galuy* had resembled those of Ecclesiasticus, the space occupied by the latter work in the Preface would be less surprising; but since the two books have only one subject (the Praise of Wisdom) in common, the reason is less obvious. It will, however, be granted that Saadyah, if he be the author of this Preface, must, when he wrote it, have been fresh from the study of Ben-Sira.

Materials for dating this Preface, at any rate roughly, are easy to find. The first edition must have been issued after the quarrel between Saadyah and David B. Zakkai had broken out. The commencement of the dispute has been fixed by the researches of Grätz for the year 930 A.D.<sup>1</sup> But Saadyah and David were completely reconciled in 936, and Saadyah to the end of his life exhibited affectionate loyalty to David and his descendants. Now the Preface before us shows that Saadyah is by no means reconciled to David, who is severely attacked in it, and whom the author apparently hopes by the violence of his lampoons to frighten into better ways<sup>2</sup>. Therefore the Preface is not later than 936.

Attention must, however, be called to some difficulties. The author, quite early in his Preface, speaks of his *residence in Irak* as an event in the past. "I too, *when in Irak*<sup>3</sup>, composed, at the suggestion of one who was chief *at the Capital*, a Book, &c." Now when was Saadyah *not* in Irak? Only, it would seem, before his migration from Egypt. For that Irak cannot mean Baghdad in this sentence is clear; that is termed "the Capital"<sup>4</sup>. The locality of Sora is known; Pumbadita has been identified by the researches of Neubauer and Ainsworth<sup>5</sup> with Jubbah; and these two places are juxtaposed in some of the works of the Arabic geographers, as in the Sawad or Irak<sup>6</sup>. Hence it seems clear that after 928 Saadyah was to the end of his life in Irak. But we have seen that the Preface cannot have been written before 930. Thus this unlucky "when I was in Irak" seems to wreck the credit of the Preface.

We must, however, consider the probability of the book in question

<sup>1</sup> Grätz, p. 462.

<sup>2</sup> P. 155, l. 19.

<sup>3</sup> P. 151, 21. For the grammatical point see Vernier, § 965.

<sup>4</sup> See *Bibl. Geogr. Arab.*, VI, 236, 21.

<sup>5</sup> *Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition*, I, 435.

<sup>6</sup> See Yakut, s. vv., *Bibl. Geogr. Arab.*, loc. cit., 237; De Goeje, *ibid.*, VIII, 427, 432; also I, 85, 4 a. f, II, 166.

being written when Saadyah was in Irak. The Letter of Ibn Meir<sup>1</sup>, to which that book was an answer, bears date 923<sup>2</sup>. Saadyah is violently abused in it, but it also claims for the Western community certain rights over the Eastern community. While therefore it was natural that Saadyah should reply to it, he could scarcely do so without the authorization of the "Head of the Captivity at Baghdad," i.e. David Ben Zakkai. This he appears to have done in a book bearing date 926, as we shall presently see. If Saadyah was still in Egypt, the length of time between Ibn Meir's missive and Saadyah's answer is accounted for by the number of cross-communications required. And that Saadyah only went *once* to the East to remain there, appears from the statements of the historians. David Ben Zakkai "sent to Egypt to fetch him in 928<sup>3</sup>." The time when he was in Fayyum is spoken of as the time "before he went to Assyria<sup>4</sup>."

This matter is not rendered clearer, but more obscure, by the scandalous document which forms the last of Harkavy's supplements. It is a fragment of a history of Saadyah's struggle, evidently by a violent partisan. In virulence and obscenity it exceeds anything of the sort I have ever seen—the manifesto of the Spaniards at the time of the Armada scarcely comes near it. In this chronicle the charges are brought against Saadyah which the Preface professes to answer. "He wrote a scroll in imitation of the prophets, and falsified his lineage, saying, 'I am of the sons of Judah' . . . Then he said, 'Why did you not claim to be of the tribe of Judah *these thirteen years*?'"<sup>5</sup> The answer in the Preface is, as will be seen, a ridiculous quibble, but the supposed Saadyah distinctly states that he had *previously no occasion to give his pedigree*<sup>6</sup>. This being so, it would seem that the *terminus a quo* of the thirteen years must be either Saadyah's birth, or his migration to the East. But it cannot be the former; therefore it must be the latter. According to the ordinary view which makes Saadyah come to the East in 928 for the first time, this charge will be brought in 941, five years after the quarrel had been patched up, and about a year after David B. Zakkai's death! But if we make Saadyah come to the East in 923, we get 936 as the date of the charge, which is too late; 930<sup>7</sup> is probably the

<sup>1</sup> Identified by Harkavy.

<sup>2</sup> P. 219, 6.

<sup>3</sup> R. Sherira, in Neubauer's *Chronicles*, I, 40. *Juhasin*, ed. Filipowski, p. 206. Grätz, p. 258. Cp. Pinsker, *Lik Kad.*, p. 22, ult.

<sup>4</sup> Dunash B. Tamim, ap. Grätz, p. 457.

<sup>5</sup> P. 229.

<sup>6</sup> P. 165, 16.

<sup>7</sup> According to Nathan Babli (Neubauer, *Chronicles*, II, 81), the date of the *Herem* must have been 930. And the charge is brought *before* the *Herem*.

latest possible date for it. But if we make him come to the East in 917, we shall require either *three* visits to the East, or a visit of seven years' duration for the first. Moreover the supposition of two or more visits conflicts with the assertion of the *Herem* that Saadyah was an unknown man when he came to the East, whose pious airs took people in<sup>1</sup>. The true solution seems clearly to be that the author of the virulent chronicle has by mistake made Saadyah's opponent count from the time of Saadyah's arrival in the East to the *time of his death*.

For the present purpose the rough dating from 930 to 936 may be provisionally accepted for the *Sefer Ha-Galuy*; the date of the real work was probably 934 or 935. For Abraham B. Chiyyah in his *Megillath Ha-Megalleh*<sup>2</sup> mentions the books in which Saadyah dealt with Eschatology in the following order: the Commentary on Daniel, the *Imānūt*, and the *Sefer Ha-Galuy*. There might be some ground for putting the first (as one of a series) out of its proper order; but the order of the other two should be chronological. The time of Saadyah's forced retirement would be the natural time for him to write memoirs. And since he could scarcely have made the mistake about his being in Irak in 926, we have already a double presumption against the genuineness of the Preface.

Let us now look at Saadyah's writings, and see what we can glean from them of his acquaintance with Ben-Sira. We go first to his Commentary on the Proverbs, where we should expect to find frequent reference to Ecclesiasticus, since we are told in this Preface that Ecclesiasticus resembles Proverbs. But we are disappointed; there is not a single reference to Ben-Sira. Yet in this Commentary he is not unwilling to illustrate the Proverbs from extra-Biblical sources. On p. 48 he cites successively several Talmudic Tractates. On p. 160 he quotes *Aboth* three times. On p. 174 he borrows an apophthegm from a Mohammedan *adab*-book. A comparison of the descriptions of Wisdom in Ecclesiasticus, especially in c. xxiv, with that of Proverbs viii, would have an interest for any one familiar with both books; but Saadyah makes no allusion to Ben-Sira's description.

Next we come to the Commentary on the *Sefer Yetsirah*, finished 930 A.D. There is no reference in it to Ben-Sira; but, since several pages of this book are devoted to the fixing of grammatical rules from pointed texts, it is difficult to explain the absence of any such reference, if the author believed himself to possess a text of Ecclesiasticus actually pointed by Ben-Sira. However, he cites from the Talmud

<sup>1</sup> P. 234.

<sup>2</sup> Grätz, p. 463. I have verified the citation in a Bodleian MS.

two passages which have reference to the lawfulness of metaphysics (p. 6), and one of these, which is really Ben-Sira's (iii. 21), is ascribed by him to Eleazar Ben 'Ira. The natural inference would be that this was a slip of memory on the part of either Saadyah or his scribe, not surprising in the case of a name of no great note<sup>1</sup>.

In the Religious Philosophy (*Al-Imānāt*), composed in 933, the subject of the lawfulness of metaphysics recurs on p. 21, but the passage of "Eleazar Ben 'Ira" is omitted, though the other Talmudic passage is quoted. This looks as if Saadyah's mistake had excited censure; and indeed during the years 930-933 Saadyah's enemies doubtless made the most they could of any errors they could find in his writings—there were not many to be found. Later on in the book he does cite Ben-Sira *once* (p. 301), but *from the Talmud* (*B. Sanhedrin*, 100 b); the Cairene text (xlii. 9) differs considerably.

Thus far then we have at least made it probable that up to the year 933 Saadyah knew no more of Ben-Sira than can be learnt from the meagre citations in the Talmud, and felt but small interest in these. If there is an argument from silence, here we have a case of one. Saadyah is a great quoter; in the tenth book of his religious philosophy he goes through the whole range of human pursuits, marriage, parenthood, money-making, pleasure-seeking, feasting, ambition—subjects about which Ecclesiasticus is a mine of aphorisms: but yet he only quotes it *once*, and then from a *Talmudic quotation*. On p. 89 he polemizes against those who say wisdom is an entity apart from God, basing their opinion on Prov. viii. 22. "This theory," he says, "I have already refuted; I have shown that the text means that God created things in such a way as to make his wisdom manifest." This is clearly the view of Ben-Sira in ch. i, whereas in ch. xxiv Wisdom is identified with Holy Scripture; but Saadyah takes no notice of either passage.

The editor of the *Imānāt* gives some reasons for thinking Bk. x later than the rest; in any case it is not earlier than 933. Had Saadyah known the Cairene Ecclesiasticus then, he would have quoted it often, and have quoted it according to what he supposed to be the original, not according to an inaccurate citation in the Talmud. Therefore, if he wrote the Preface to the *Sefer Ha-Galuy*, he must some time after 933 have become thoroughly familiar with the Cairene text. The book was not then one with which he had been familiar from childhood (as we are with our Apocrypha), but one with which he had comparatively late in life become acquainted at Baghdad. And now let us see what the supposed Saadyah says

<sup>1</sup> Ramban at the end of his Preface to the Torah quotes this same passage from "one of our Holy Rabbis."



about it. He asserts that Ben-Sira, who evidently lived before the Maccabees,—for he regularly names the book of Ben-Sira at the head of his list—wrote a book resembling Proverbs which he cut up into verses and *provided with points and accents*. By these points and accents he clearly means those in use in our ordinary Hebrew Bibles, for he identifies those employed by Ben-Sira with those employed by himself, of which he gives a specimen in the fragment of the text of the *Sefer Ha-Galuy*. But later on he states most distinctly that the book was not handed down with the sacred books of the Jews<sup>1</sup>. For such transmission is one of the constituent elements of inspiration, which Ben-Sira's book did not possess. The question is what can be made of these statements. First, can Saadyah have really thought that Ben-Sira provided his book with points and accents? It is easy to find passages in his genuine writings which prove that he cannot have been so ignorant. In the Commentary on the Proverbs (p. 52) he polemizes against the opponents of the Rabbanites. "None of these persons," he says, "have taken any trouble over the Massorah, the rules for writing the Bible, its 'superfluous and deficient,' its grammar and vowels<sup>2</sup>, nor about the statutes and judgments, and the rest of the religious matters contained in the Tradition. They found all ready made for them, and merely pick a few holes." Hence it is clear that he regarded the vocalization of the Bible as a recent achievement, and this follows from the statements of the Commentary on the *Sefer Yetsirah*. The notion that the author of that book reckons the vowels among the letters he does not tolerate<sup>3</sup>. The vocalization of the Bible is done partly by observation of traditional pronunciation, partly by principles; "the school of Tiberias double the *Resh* in the Bible, but that of Irak does so in speech, but not in the Bible; I have looked for the rules of the latter, but cannot find them: the rules of the former school shall be given later on<sup>4</sup>." At the close of the Commentary he prays that he may be numbered among the savants who provided the nation with a grammar of their sacred books, and who committed the *Sefer Yetsirah* to writing<sup>5</sup>. The exact parallel to Saadyah's statements about the vocalization of the Bible is to be found in the way in which Mohammedan scholars speak of the vocalization of the Koran. Othman has the consonants fixed, and sends copies to the chief capitals of Islam; but these require experts to read them. Presently vowel and pausal signs are invented and the pronunciation

<sup>1</sup> P. 163, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Arabic *اشكاله و اعرابه*. It makes little difference whether the second word is pointed as a verb or as a noun.

<sup>3</sup> P. 42, 5 a. f.

<sup>4</sup> P. 46, 4. f.

<sup>5</sup> P. 105.

of the most famous readers is artificially recorded. But there is some ground for preferring one reader's pronunciation to that of another; and this may be grammatical or theological<sup>1</sup>. If the founders of Hebrew grammar had had pointed texts 1,000 years or more old, these must have been made the basis of their studies. Therefore Saadyah, who took no mean part in founding Hebrew grammar, cannot have written in this ignorant way. Rashi<sup>2</sup>, who is far less acute than Saadyah, and who lived several generations later, betrays himself for a moment into thinking the Gemara speaks of written accents, but immediately recalls the error. Ibn Ezra sometimes charges Saadyah with neglecting the accents; "he ventures to correct the Accentuator!" he exclaims on Exodus xvii. 15; "if Saadyah's rendering were right, why did the Accentuator combine the words otherwise?" he asks on xxxiv. 6<sup>3</sup>. Now if Saadyah thought Ben-Sira's book pointed by himself, he must have supposed the books of the Prophets to have been pointed by themselves; and indeed the words of the *Sefer Ha-Galuy* imply that he did think so. But then he could not have ventured to correct the Accentuator; since the Prophets must (on our author's own principle)<sup>4</sup> have known best what they meant. From Ibn Ezra's injudicious criticism we learn that Saadyah was well aware that the accents were of very little authority, and could be neglected with little danger; Ibn Ezra should have been more cautious in criticizing the great master.

If, however, Saadyah by any possibility meant *traditional* points and accents, then it is quite evident that such a book must have been included in the religious literature of the Jews. The idea of a non-canonical book with a traditional vocalization and intonation is too absurd for discussion. The only possibility that remains is that Saadyah meant these statements *as a jest*; in his opinion, or in that of the satirist who uses his name, Ben-Sira's book with its points and accents has been suddenly sprung on the Jewish community. Hence he humorously suggests that Ben-Sira pointed it himself!

The next point that should have excited suspicion is the character of the mysterious author Eleazar Ben 'Ira. As has been seen, in 930 Saadyah wrote his name by mistake for Ben-Sira. By 933 he has learnt to write it correctly. By the time he writes the

<sup>1</sup> The best authority for this is Suyuti, *Itkân*, frequently printed. See also Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Korans*. Some further references are given in the Preface to my *Chrestomathia Baidawiana*.

<sup>2</sup> *B. Berachoth*, 62 a.

<sup>3</sup> I owe the references to Ibn Ezra to Dukes, in Ewald's *Beiträge*, II, 84, n. 2. The first is inaccurate.

<sup>4</sup> P. 181, 14.

*Sefer Ha-Galuy* he is thoroughly familiar with Ecclesiasticus. Now the fragments edited by Dr. Schechter contain the verse which in 930 Saadyah ascribed to Eleazar Ben-'Ira. Saadyah, who knew it by heart, could not fail to see that the verse was Ben-Sira's, and, if Eleazar had it too, the latter, who is regularly mentioned after Ben-Sira, must have borrowed it from Ben-Sira. But in spite of this Saadyah is apparently incorrigible. He gives three select morsels of Eleazar and assigns the first place to this very verse!

Thirdly, the company in which the work of Ben-Sira is mentioned is most compromising. After Eleazar Ben 'Ira comes the book written by the five Hasmoneids, and indeed pointed and accented by them. Their names are given in full so that there can be no mistake; and a text (ver. 25) is quoted from their work which proves it to be the Aramaic text of the *Megillath Antiochus*, edited by Jellinek (*Bet Ha-Midrash*, VI). This is called by Jellinek "a late liturgical product." Mr. Abrahams has published in the number of this REVIEW for January, 1899, another text of the work, and asserts<sup>1</sup> that it *must be classed with some other mediaeval compilations in Aramaic*. According to both editors, it is based ultimately on the Greek Books of the Maccabees.

Since then Saadyah, according to Jellinek and Abrahams, mistook a "mediaeval compilation," based ultimately on Greek documents, for an original of the time of the Maccabees, he may clearly have made a similar mistake about the Cairene Ecclesiasticus. If his authority is sufficient to prove the latter work authentic, it is sufficient to prove the *Megillath Antiochus* the work of the five Maccabees. If his quotation is in the one case insufficient to identify the document, it is insufficient in the other case to identify the document. *Science has one weight and one balance.*

That the conclusions of the editors about the origin of this document are correct must be apparent to any one who glances at either text. The wide difference between the recensions is sufficient to show that the work was of no authority. We are told that there is a reference to it in the *Halachoth G'doloth*; but this is an error, for the work there cited (ed. Hildesheimer, Berlin, 1888, p. 615) is the *Megillath Ta'anith*, which is a comparatively old work, ascribed in the Gemara of *B. Shabbath*, 13 b, to Hananiah, son of Hezekiah. Dr. Neubauer has edited it excellently in the second volume of his *Chronicles*. From the Tosaphoth on *Shabbath*, 21 b, it may be justly inferred that the author was either unacquainted with the *Megillath Antiochus*, or at any rate paid little attention to it. The story is there told how, after the cleansing of the Temple by the Maccabees, *one* pot of oil was found

<sup>1</sup> P. 295.

"deposited," with the seal of the high priest. The glossator is interested in the question *where* it was deposited—for if the heathen had handled it, it would have been of no use. It might have been worth observing that in the *Megillath Antiochus*, in which this passage occurs in Aramaic, for "deposited" the word "sealed" is substituted.

The influence of various intermediate languages is traceable in the different versions of this work. The word for "shrine," used in both the copies referred to (פרכא), seems to be Christian Syriac, and to have been misunderstood by the redactor<sup>1</sup>. The names *Baghres* and *Makaneē* show traces of the Arabic alphabet. A copy in the Bodleian Library, which has the "Assyrian" pointing, mentions that the river of Jerusalem was dammed, implying that the author was little acquainted with Eastern geography. Mr. Abrahams' copy makes Antiochus issue from "Rome," thereby betraying the influence of Arabic or Persian; for it is chiefly in these languages that that name is used for "Greece." "When Darius," says Firdausi, "heard that the army of Rome was on the move<sup>2</sup>." The etymology of the name Maccabee, "slayer of the mighty," seems to be a combination of Hebrew and Greek<sup>3</sup>. However, even without these clues it is certain that all the texts of this work that are at present accessible are of such a nature that not even the meanest intelligence could mistake it for the autobiography of the five Hasmoneids.

Then, can Saadyah have made such a mistake? The *Sefer Yetsirah* is ascribed to Abraham; but Saadyah expresses himself in the most scholarly way on this subject. "Abraham may have *thought* it; but it must have been put together and clothed with words in recent times, and indeed in Syria, as the double R shows<sup>4</sup>." A number in the text disagrees with an actual calculation; Saadyah collates MSS. and emends the text. In the *Imānāt* he notices an opinion ascribed to the Brahmins, and explains what the Brahmins really think. I doubt whether there has ever been a more cautious writer than Saadyah. Hence, if he wrote in this style about the *Megillah*, he must have been *jesting*; and hence what he says about Ben-Sira is also a jest.

To the present writer, then, it seems that what the *Sefer Ha-Galuy* says about Ben Sira and the other books is by itself sufficient to condemn both it and them. We will now examine it from another point of view. A book bearing this name was known before Firkovitch's time by the quotation in the work of Abraham b. Chiyah,

<sup>1</sup> The Persian has במסדה (= במסה?).

<sup>2</sup> Vuller's *Christomathia Shahnamiana*, first verse. The same usage is found in Pehlevi; see West's *Ardak-Vīrāf*, p. 141.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps פקח *baiaous*.

<sup>4</sup> Pp. 12, 13.

and another in the *Sefer Ha-Kabbalah* of Abraham b. David (c. 1165), where, after a brief account of the Gaon, we are told (in the style of the Books of Kings) that "the rest of the acts of R. Saadyah, and the good which he did unto Israel, verily they are written in the *Sefer Ha-Galuy*<sup>1</sup>." When Firkovitch discovered the document which we are discussing, it was evidently more valuable than had been generally anticipated, as being an *autobiography*; on the other hand, it was evident that only a few lines of the original work survived, all the rest being preface. Steinschneider immediately suspected that it was a forgery. Let us try and find the reasons for his supposition.

The few lines of Hebrew constituting the text of the work offer great difficulties of interpretation. It commences thus: דְּבָרֵי סֵפֶר הַגָּלוּי הַכְמוּס רְאֵהוּ וְחִסּוֹן מוֹסֵר אִמְרֵי צְחוֹת הֵם אוֹצְרוֹ. The last clause is an imitation of Isa. xxxiii. 6, and doubtless means "correct words are its store," i.e. it, the *Sefer Ha-Galuy*, is a store of correct diction. This agrees with what we read in the Preface. The author divides his work into ten sections, of which nos. 1-7 are special, whereas 8, 9, and 10 are spread over the whole work. In no. 8 he is going to teach the Jews pure or correct Hebrew, "because I have seen that, *since Arabic and Nabataean have got the upper hand*, they have forgotten their pure language and their eloquent speech." In no. 9 he will instruct them in composition and construction generally; this will be, as it were, a torch to guide them in arranging their discourse and their ideas. In no. 10 he will teach them conjunctions; "for no discourse is quite intelligible without conjunctions to knit it together, and make the ideas logical; else it will fall to pieces and be spoiled<sup>2</sup>." The author foresees the happiest results to the youth of his nation from the study of his work; they will all become eloquent, and realize Isaiah's prophecy (xxxii. 4).

This, then, is his promise; his language is to be faultlessly pure, his grammar and syntax without a flaw. Now from the Commentary on *Sefer Yetsirah* we can gauge Saadyah's ability in this respect; and, though he is unlikely to have boasted in this style, it would have been in his power to keep his promise tolerably well. But what a performance have we here! The first sentence alone contains two words of great obscurity, חִסּוֹן and רְאֵהוּ. רְאֵהוּ in the next line is from the Targum of Job. The word נִשְׁמֵם is exceedingly faulty for נִשְׁמָה. The form מְלֵהֶבֶת is not Biblical, but Arabic. The syntax of the first verse seems decidedly open to criticism. The author, however, undertakes to help us, premising that, since it is his own book,

<sup>1</sup> Neubauer, *Chronicles*, I, 66.

<sup>2</sup> Pp. 155, 21 to 157, 7.

he will know best what it meant. But his translation is as bad as his text. He renders the title of the book, "The Banishing Book"—a worse mistake than even a beginner could make; it is bad enough to render it "The Book of the Exile," as some have done. Then the Arabic is also ungrammatical, and appears to follow the principle of substituting for the Hebrew text the Arabic words that most resemble it in sound. Then much of the Hebrew is pointed in an impossible way. Clearly, then, a beginner's exercise could scarcely be more faulty than this model of style and correctness!

From this fact, which is unquestionable, and which Dr. Harkavy recognizes to some extent, some inferences may be drawn.

1. We have here as much of the *Sefer Ha-Galuy in this form* as was ever written. Had the author attempted to write a page, he could not have maintained the same level of error. To cram so much bad Hebrew and bad Arabic into eight lines must have taken days, if not weeks. Moreover, an author of whose work Harkavy has discovered a fragment (p. 182) quotes sufficient of this passage to show that Saadyah's Hebrew was correct. For מלהבת בנחלת this author has להבת נחלת, which is quite unobjectionable; for בוק אור he has בוק. Now this author tells us that the words were defended by Saadyah in the *Kitāb al-I'tibār*, and that Rab Mubashshir replied to this defence in a somewhat lengthy critique. According to the letter of R. Sherira (p. 40) Rab Mubashshir died in 237 Sel. But we are happily able to correct this to 238 from the statement of another chronicler<sup>1</sup>, and now we can arrange our documents. A work on the Calendar, bearing a name translated into Hebrew as *Sefer Ha-Hakkārah*, of which the original Arabic would probably be *Al-I'tibār*, was composed by Saadyah in this very year 238<sup>2</sup>. It was in Arabic. Another quotation, probably from the same book<sup>3</sup>, shows that it was in reply to "a wicked man," one of the *Minim*. As the last phrase is one which Jews apply to members of a different party from their own, it seems clear that Saadyah's book was in answer to the letter of Ibn Meir, of which Harkavy has published two fragments, in which "next year" is said to be 854 from the Destruction of the Temple, i.e. 924<sup>4</sup>. The Sel. year 238 corresponds with 926. If Harkavy's conjecture be correct, Rab Mubashshir replied to Saadyah's words *at least four years after the former's death*; or else we should have to conclude that Saadyah, although his words, when grammatically correct, had excited criticism, deliber-

<sup>1</sup> Neubauer, *Chronicles*, I, 189.

<sup>2</sup> *Œuvres de Saadyah*, IX, 149. The *Fihrist* says Saadyah's work on the Calendar was called *Al-'Uḡūr*, which is not Arabic in this sense; but the title may have contained both words.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>4</sup> P. 219, 6.

ately turned them into impossible Hebrew, and placed them at the commencement of a work which was to be a model of style!

If, on the other hand, this Preface is by a person whose design is to ridicule Saadyah, he very naturally selected for parody some words of Saadyah's which had become notorious.

Dr. Harkavy strangely prefers the barbarous Hebrew to the correct, and meets the difficulty of the title of the book as follows. Rab Mubashshir purposely altered it, he supposes, "in order not to call attention to the fact that Saadyah had been *banished* by his enemies." But neither the Hebrew nor the Arabic title of the *Sefer Ha-Galuy* could have suggested such an idea. The Hebrew title must have suggested to any Jewish hearer the passage in Jeremiah whence it is taken, and where it means "unsealed book." To Syrian Christians *Galuy* might have suggested *Gālūyā*, "exile"; but assuredly this Preface was not intended for their perusal. On the other hand, the Arabic translation of the title given in the Preface means "Banishing Book," "Hunting Book," possibly "Passing Book"; but certainly not "The Book of the Exile," unless Arabic grammar be abandoned.

It may be added that eminent scholars have sometimes erred in identifying books with different titles which cover the same ground. Von Kremer, who knew Abu' l-'Ala's writings well, declared that his *Kitāb Al-Fuṣūl* was another name for his *Luzumiyyāt*; but he was shown to be mistaken by Goldziher. If Rab Mubashshir (in his grave) had wished out of motives of delicacy to avoid mentioning the *Sefer Ha-Galuy*, surely he would have called it "Saadyah's Memoirs" rather than mislead the reader, who would be at least likely to confuse it with the *Sefer Ha-Hakkārah*. Indeed, in the case of an author like Saadyah, who "wrote books without number," such a wilful alteration would be most undesirable.

2. Saadyah cannot have seriously *given this as a specimen of pure and correct Hebrew*. For we see from his writings that he knew exactly what words were to be found in the Bible, the Targum, and the Talmud. This appears from his commentaries, especially from that on the *Sefer Yetsirah*. He there observes<sup>1</sup> that by transposing the radicals you get different roots. Several transpositions of the radicals שרק are to be found in the sacred tongue; רקש *only in the Targum*; רקש is not found "in this language at all" (though it is found in Arabic). Therefore he must have known that ליה was a word of the Targum, which must not be used in a pattern of correct Hebrew; and that נשמ was "not used in this language at all"<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> P. 51.

<sup>2</sup> I should not affirm that Saadyah could not have written Hebrew of

Some of the points in this satire can be understood without difficulty. Saadyah has been criticized for guessing at the meaning of Hebrew words from the Arabic words that most resembled them. He rendered כְּמוֹס in Deut. xxxii. 34 by the Arabic *mahnūz*, and this translation is reproduced here. חֶסֶן = *makhzūn*, similarly reproduces his rendering of Isa. xxiii. 18. צַחֲוֹת contains a hit at the title of one of Saadyah's books, and its employment as an abstract singular is to ridicule Saadyah's note on Prov. ix. 10.

3. But since Saadyah is the object of the satire, it is unlikely that he can be the author of it. It has no point unless Saadyah or persons who follow Saadyah are hit. And though his Arabic translation of the Bible is obliquely assailed, it must be some performance in bad Hebrew which was associated with the Rabbanite party that is mainly attacked. And one of the points of attack will be the employment of Arabic and Nabataean words. I know of no book which can be more effectively attacked on the score of Arabizing than the Cairene Ecclesiasticus. That such words as חָלַק "create," רָצַד "watch," רָעָה "respect," רָצַף "illuminate" are Arabic, and indeed Mohammedan Arabic, need not be proved. And the employment of Arabic words could be justified by the usage of the Mishnah. *Shabbath*, 51 b, with *nāḡah*, *khīṭām*, *zimām*, takes us into the heart of Arabia, and the employment of words like these amid what professes to be Hebrew justly provokes ridicule.

What the author means by *Nabataean* words is not at first sight so clear. A contemporary of Saadyah, Ibn Al-Fakīh<sup>1</sup>, tells us that the

this sort, but only that he would not have placed it at the head of a book which was to be a pattern of pure and correct language. For by "pure Hebrew" every one means "Biblical Hebrew," and he had only to consult his lists to see whether the words occurred in the Bible or did not occur; he might have forgotten to do this in the body of the work, but could not have failed to do so at the outset. The fragment printed by Harkavy, p. 187 sqq., which he thinks comes from the Commentary on the *Sefer Ha-Galuy*, shows that the author allowed himself considerable licence—as indeed from his words in the Commentary on the *Sefer Yetzirah* we should expect that Saadyah would—but not on this scale. Moreover, the words about Wisdom, "The Lord God has reserved it for his might, and given to his *Gaon* its dwelling-place," contain an ambiguity that the *Gaon* himself would surely have avoided. The habit of some Oriental writers, of making their works purposely obscure, so as to need comments by themselves, is well known, and Saadyah may have done as others did. But then in his Preface he would have explained that it was the difficulty of the text which rendered a commentary necessary—and to this point there is no allusion.

<sup>1</sup> *Bibl. Geogr. Arab.*, V, 35.



Nabataeans were "the barbarians of the Sawad." Another contemporary, the learned and accurate Mas'udi<sup>1</sup>, adds that they were the relics of the ancient Babylonians; and he tells us that in their language *arya* meant "lion," with plural *aryan*. This word is familiar to us in Aramaic, and it is likely that Mas'udi's informant purposely altered the plural *ary'wān* with the object of deriving the name *Iran* from it. A number of Nabataean words are reckoned by Suyūṭi<sup>2</sup> among the foreign elements in the Koran; and a still more interesting collection can be made from the Mu'arrab of Jawaliki<sup>3</sup>, who does not confine his observations to the Sacred Book. The authorities followed by Suyūṭi and Jawaliki include the most distinguished names of Arabic philology. Al-Asma'i made the remark that the Nabataeans alter the Arabic *Ẓ* to *Ṭ*; he illustrates this by *Bar-Ṭulla*, which, he says, means "son of the shade." We have no difficulty in recognizing this as Jewish Aramaic. Another point noticed by the Arabic philologists is that in Nabataean the soft aspirate *Ḥ* is pronounced *H*, and by the aid of this observation we can recognize many Aramaic words. LA DAHLA<sup>4</sup> is Nabataean for "do not fear" (לֹא דַחֵלָא); HASṢ for "back" (Syriac and New-Syriac חֵץ); MHRZḲ "imprisoned" (מַהְרֹק) "*B. Nedarim*, 91b, ap. Levy); HNDḲUḲ "lotus" (Syriac and Talm. הַנְּדִקָּן); finally, the name HUB<sup>5</sup>, said to be a woman's name in Nabataean, which by an extraordinary coincidence is actually found, with the spelling HuBU, in a real Nabataean inscription<sup>6</sup>. Now this substitution of *H* for *Ḥ* not only appears in the spelling of certain words in the Babylonian Gemara<sup>7</sup>, but we may infer from some of the etymologies there given that the latter sound had become unpronounceable. Thus, in the interpretation of dreams it appears that if you see a HASPED, it implies that you will be "spared" (ḤAS) and "delivered"<sup>8</sup>. The parallel substitution of *Ṣ* for *Ẓ* is certified for the language of the Gemara by the famous various reading at the commencement of *Abodah Zarah*, but also by some express statements<sup>9</sup>. A similar change may be inferred for the language called Nabataean by the statement of Suyūṭi that עברת meant "I killed" (אוֹבֵרֵת) in the latter tongue.

These facts and a certain number of further coincidences in vocabulary justify us in identifying the language of the Babylonian

<sup>1</sup> *Bibl. Geogr. Arab.*, VIII, 38.

<sup>2</sup> *Itkân*, pp. 317-26 (Calcutta, 1857).

<sup>3</sup> Ed. Sachau, Leipsic, 1865.

<sup>4</sup> Jawaliki, p. 67. Both Suyuti and Jawaliki give the words in alphabetical order.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> Euting, *Nabatäische Inschriften*, Index.

<sup>7</sup> So דַּרְר for דָּרַר (Syriac).

<sup>8</sup> *Berachoth*, 37a (cf. *Moed Qaton*, ad init.).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 32a.

Gemara with these authors' "Nabataean." הַרְדִּי, says Jawaliḳi, is Nabataean for *hurdi*, "match-boarding." This word occurs in *Baba Bathra*, 6 a, but the Rabbis are not clear about its meaning. וַיָּקָא, according to the same author, is Nabataean for "wind"; it has that meaning in Jewish Aramaic and Mandaic. פֶּרְדָּאָא, according to Suyuṭi, meant "vineyard" in Nabataean; it has that sense (with ē for ā) in *Baba Metsia*, 73 a. קְטָנָא in Nabataean, says the same, means "our writing"; he probably refers to the familiar נָט, which properly signifies any form of contract<sup>1</sup>. סְפָרָה in Nabataean means "readers"; as the word is meant for the plural of סוֹפֵר, this is sufficiently accurate<sup>2</sup>. We should be glad to know whether the Nabataeans formed their present tense with K, as this idiom, which the researches of Mr. Arsen Aidynean might show to have been borrowed from vulgar Armenian<sup>3</sup>, is probably the most characteristic of all the peculiarities of the dialect we are discussing.

It appears, then, that in the language of good Arabic authors of the tenth century "Nabataean" meant the vernacular language of Irak, which, owing to its large borrowings from Persian, was by some authors coupled with that language, and by others even identified with it and Syriac<sup>4</sup>. By the "Nabataean, which had ousted the pure Hebrew," the author of the *Sefer Ha-Galuy* means the language of the Baylonian Gemara, and probably has in mind in this sentence the gross Talmudisms which have been noticed in the Cairene Ecclesiasticus. But would Saadyah have either called the language of the Gemara "Nabataean," or complained that it was ousting pure Hebrew? It seems clear that he would have done neither. He is responsible for making the Babylonian Talmud the chief study of the Jews, while he has also the merit of having helped to reduce the Hebrew language to rules; but he doubtless was certain that the two studies could be carried on simultaneously without the one endangering the other.

4. Had not Saadyah been the founder of a school, he would only have been satirized in his lifetime. But it must be remembered that he was the champion who won the cause of the Rabbanites. His place in the history of Judaism corresponds remarkably with that of Abu'l-Hasan Al-Ash'ari among the Mohammedans. Owing to Saadyah the Rabbanites are the orthodox Jews and the Karaites a sect. Now

<sup>1</sup> Delitzsch, *Assyr. Hdw.*, p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> בְּרִישָׁא, for "son of man," is mentioned as Nabataean by a very early writer, Ibn Kutaibah, *Adab al-Katib*, p. 176. Most of the above words have been identified by Nöldeke and Fränkel.

<sup>3</sup> *Critical Grammar* (Vienna, 1866), II, 76 (in modern Armenian).

<sup>4</sup> *Mafātih Al-'Ulūm*, ed. Van Vloten, p. 117.

the defeated are apt in such a case to hate the conqueror for a long series of generations. That this was so in Saadyah's case is proved by what Jepheth Ibn Ali (who was two generations after Saadyah) says of him. When "the Fayyumi" is referred to in Jepheth's writings, the reference is accompanied with a curse, or at least an expression of contempt. "He ruined Israel<sup>1</sup>;" "God shall take vengeance on him and his like<sup>2</sup>." These expressions occur in a book written forty years after Saadyah's death. Unless I am mistaken, wherever Jepheth calls attention to a grammatical, linguistic, or other error on the part of "those who do not know the language," Saadyah is the object of his criticisms. How long this bitterness was kept up by the Karaites I do not know; but as Jepheth's writings were (in spite of their feebleness) copied and read for some four centuries, it probably was maintained for a great length of time<sup>3</sup>. This hatred of the dead is an extraordinary phenomenon, but parallels to it are easy to find. Dozy observes that still when the Shiites come to Medinah, they say over the graves of the three Caliphs, *ṣallāhu 'llāhu*, "may God roast him," for "may God be merciful to him"—such is their affection for Ali<sup>4</sup>. We shall see reason presently for putting the date of the present satire after 962 on internal evidence; how long after must probably be fixed by the nature of the MS., which shows signs of being an autograph. The author must certainly have had the real *Sefer Ha-Galuy* before him; but then that seems to have been read in the twelfth century, as we have seen, and several of Saadyah's writings to which allusion is made are still classics.

That the author should have got up the history of Saadyah with sufficient care to enable him to personate the Gaon at all is surprising; but facts can surprise us without being impossibilities. The documents collected by Harkavy show that the materials for a minute study of Saadyah's history existed for some centuries after his death; unpublished writings of his fell after his death into the hands of Karaites<sup>5</sup>: and we have seen that the desire to present Saadyah in a ludicrous and repulsive light was also present. The production of the retranslation of Ecclesiasticus and the *Megillath Antiochus* gave the witty pamphleteer an occasion for practising his art. The *Megillah* survived, being but gently hit, and being connected with the Jewish liturgy. But the document which to scholars of the nineteenth century proved the genuineness of the Cairene Ecclesiasticus seems to have driven it off the stage in the uncritical Middle Ages.

<sup>1</sup> *Comm. on Daniel*, ed. D. S. M., p. 116, 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>3</sup> Pinsker, *Lik. Kad.*, p. 174, quotes an attack on Saadyah of about the year 1050 A. D.

<sup>4</sup> Dozy, *L'Islamisme*.

<sup>5</sup> Pinsker, *ṣ"ḥ*, appendix, p. 37.

Our conclusion, then, from an examination of the ostensible fragment of the *Sefer Ha-Galuy* is that it cannot be genuine on the following grounds. (1) Both it and the Preface lay the greatest possible stress on the correctness of the Hebrew, and this Hebrew is grossly and even scandalously impure and incorrect; but we know from Saadyah's writings that if he had chosen to make such a promise as is here given, he could have performed it. (2) The words are evidently a wilful parody of some words actually used by Saadyah in a book bearing a different title, and criticized by Rab Mubashshir, who died four years before the *Sefer Ha-Galuy* can have been written. (3) We learn from the Preface that the book commenced in a different way<sup>1</sup>.

We may now proceed to analyse the Preface.

The author commences by saying that since prophecy has ceased, it is the duty of the learned to chronicle events and write down their ideas; and mentions, as persons who have done so, Simon son of Jesus son of Eleazar son of Sira, Eleazar son of 'Ira, the five Hasmoneids, the people of Kairawan of his own time who wrote a book about what had been done to them by Sa'di the Christian, and finally himself when, during his residence in Irak, he had composed a work called the Book of Feasts in answer to a letter of Ibn Meir. He had also written a book recounting the troubles and vexations he had undergone at the hands of Ibn Meir's(?) friends; which is apparently identical with the *Sefer Ha-Galuy*.

We have had occasion to deal already with most of this humorous list. Dr. Harkavy has a learned excursus on the book of the people of Kairawan, but all that he can show is that Saadyah had intercourse with the Rabbis of that town. I strongly suspect that "Sa'di the Christian" is Saadyah himself. The Book of Feasts of which we know was in Arabic.

After giving this list of books he proceeds to sketch the contents of the present work, which is to be in ten sections—the same number as the *Imānāt* contains. As we shall see, he cannot make out more than seven.

1. "Description of Wisdom, how we found it out, virtues of its lovers, defects of its haters. The reason for my writing this was that those people hated me owing to their hatred of Wisdom, and their desire that there should be neither wisdom nor justice among the Jews."

The spitefulness of this sentence is not sufficient to condemn it, but it seems unworthy of Saadyah. If the account of Saadyah's troubles given by Nathan Babli be correct—and it is followed

<sup>1</sup> See below.

literally by Grätz—the cause of his conflict was not his enemies' dislike of philosophy, but their attempt to extort money unlawfully. When Saadyah had an excellent case, it is difficult to see why he should misrepresent it at the outset. We shall see presently that the Preface distinctly asserts that the book began in quite a different way; and in any case it is more likely that an enemy (such as we suppose this satirist to have been) would conceal the real cause of the dispute than that Saadyah would substitute a vague and arrogant statement of this sort for a simple and veracious epitome of the facts. I may add that Maṣ'udi was told that whereas the rank and file of the Jews followed the Tradition, the Ananites were the party who pursued *justice and true monotheism*<sup>1</sup>.

2. "Calculation of the number of years during which Prophetic Inspiration remained among the Jews, in which I show that it was 1000 years; number of years which it took to complete the Mishnah, which I show to have been 500 years after that; length of time it took to complete the Talmud. How both Mishnah and Talmud remained orally handed down till they were written. The reason which causes me to write this is that I find those who call themselves 'Rabbonim' in our time do not understand this, *neither do they follow the example of the ancients* who live in their mouths (or, 'in whose mouths they live'), and by whose trade they subsist."

According to the document published by Harkavy, p. 194, Saadyah's calculation was 510 or 530 years, starting from the year 41 from the building of the Second Temple. Clearly in this epitome he ought to have given something less vague than the statement, "Prophecy lasted 1000 years, and the Mishnah took 500 years to compile after that!" The next statement is also a piece of chaff; "both Mishnah and Talmud were handed down orally until they were written down." Who could deny this proposition? The real question that Saadyah would have handled would have been the same as that with which Rab Sherira Gaon's letter starts: "*How was the Mishnah written down? Did the men of the Great Synagogue commence writing it?*"

It has been suggested that the name *Rabbonim* betrays the hand of a Karaite, but we learn from the Commentary on Proverbs, p. 52, that this is not necessarily the case. The jibe at the end (that it is one can scarcely be denied) surely refers to the *תורה שבועל פה*, "the Law which is on the mouth." Since the earlier Rabbis lived by the Law which is on the mouth, why do the present Rabbis live by a written book? Precisely the same question is asked by Salmon

<sup>1</sup> Loc. cit., p. 112, 18. The word rendered "true monotheism" in later times stands for "religious philosophy."

ben Yerucham in his onslaught on Saadyah<sup>1</sup>: "Why have you written the Oral Law? If God had wished to write it, he would have made Moses write it. Ought you not to recite it orally, seeing that it was not to be written in a book? They have *changed their ways* and written it, transferred it from recitation to writing. They have written both Laws, rejecting the Commandment of God." Hence it must be confessed that our Karaite makes a point. But could Saadyah, who hopes he may be included among those who have endeavoured to preserve the literature of the Jews<sup>2</sup>, have ridiculed his own party in this style?

3. "Account of what happens in a country when a wicked man seeks to make himself head there. My reason for writing on this subject is the affair of David b. Zakkai."

The statement that David b. Zakkai was a wicked man who sought to make himself head is so inaccurate that it can scarcely have been made by Saadyah even in a moment of irritation. Saadyah derived his title of Gaon from David b. Zakkai; and the latter was a perfectly legitimate ruler. Saadyah took the unconstitutional step of endeavouring to oust David from the "Headship of the Captivity" in favour of a less authorized person.—Hence it is likely that this passage is aimed at Saadyah. It is noteworthy that Mas'udi uses the same word "make himself head" of Saadyah.

4. "To show that God never leaves his nation without some scholar in each age whom he instructs and enlightens, so that he may give judgment, instruct it, and manage its affairs aright; my reason for writing this is to be found in the gifts which I feel within my soul to have been conferred by God on me and it."

Here again it is impossible to say that Saadyah did not boast in this style; but his genuine writings contain little that would justify us in supposing that he could be capable of making himself so absurd. In the Commentary on Proverbs, p. 52, he polemizes at length, but in a very different style from this.

5. "Explanations of the Principles of the Commandments and of the Future which I have set forth in this book in an order intelligible to any reader. My reason for this is that I see the nation greatly needs them."

Since Saadyah wrote at length on the Principles of the 613 Precepts, and also gave in his *Imānāt* a graphic account of the future, it is difficult to see why the nation needed a further account of these matters<sup>3</sup>. Surely this paragraph is only meant to ridicule Saadyah's

<sup>1</sup> *Litteraturblatt des Orients*, 1846, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> Comm. on *Sefer Yetsirah* ad fin.

<sup>3</sup> That he did treat of the future in the *Sefer Ha-Galuy* is otherwise attested.

account of both. In Book VIII of his *Imānūt* he fixes the date of the end of the world with precision, and describes exactly what is going to happen. We shall find this fancifulness ridiculed a little later on, and Jephth Ibn Ali the Karaite is delighted to be able to say that Saadyah's "marvellous inventions" have been disproved by the event, for the date assigned by him to the world's end is passed. Since such a prophecy can be better ridiculed after it has been disproved than before, we shall scarcely be mistaken in supposing it disproved by the event when this Preface was written; *whence the Preface is brought to a later date than 962 A.D.*

6. "Narrative of the persecution, cruelty, and attempted assassination that I endured at the hands of the persons named therein, and how I prayed to God, and demanded his help. I have written this to provide a model to other just persons who may be persecuted and worried by wrongdoers, who are therefore to pray and hold out and not flag, nor hasten to conciliate their opponents and to make terms with them."

Saadyah had a great reputation for being uncompromising: his troubles were due to his refusing to countenance injustice. But would any man boast of his unwillingness to come to terms? Even Caesar, in his Civil War, tries to show that his enemies were uncompromising, not he. This passage therefore seems to be satirical; and indeed it would appear from Nathan Babli's account that Saadyah did all he could to avoid a rupture.

7. "Description with lampoons of each of my persecutors; which I was forced to write owing to its being a warning to any one who might try to persecute like them, and indeed a warning to themselves, which may induce them to stop and repent."

Perhaps this might be a genuine epitome of a paragraph. Yet that Saadyah should boast of the sharpness of his tongue seems unlikely. In his *Imānūt* he speaks without harshness of the Karaite doctors whom he refutes.

He then proceeds to describe the three general sections, which we have discussed above.—But could a *real* book be divided in this style? Seven subjects are given seven separate divisions; three others are spread over those seven sections; and these three are pure Hebrew, correct grammar, and correct logic! A more illogical method of dividing a work was surely never suggested.

Having given us an epitome of his work, the author proceeds to boast in the following style<sup>1</sup>. When the nation read the book and the young men learn it, they will gain numerous advantages. They will become experts in the Hebrew language, grammar, and logic.

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 157-9.

Every saint who is tried will learn courage. The nation will thank God all the more for never leaving them without an inspired teacher. People will know what is going to happen in the future, and in how many years the end of the world is coming, for the ignorant do not know all this, whereas the wise know it. All these boasts are illustrated in Saadyah's style by quotations from the Bible.

One of these salutary results is worth noting in particular. "The nation will be on their guard in the future against appointing a chief save after examination and thorough knowledge<sup>1</sup>." This professes to be aimed at David b. Zakkai, but it clearly applies to Saadyah himself. Saadyah, as we have seen, came to Sora as a stranger, to preside over the college; David b. Zakkai excuses the appointment on the ground of his imperfect acquaintance with Saadyah. Since Saadyah derived his own title from David, it is unlikely that he could have ventured on such dangerous ground.

That Oriental writers boast immoderately of their writings is certainly found sometimes to be the fact. But Saadyah does not appear to belong to that class. The modest wish with which he closes his Commentary on the *Sefer Yetsirah* is very different from the ludicrous self-laudation which the pages before us contain. Hence it seems highly improbable that these pages can proceed from any one but an enemy of Saadyah's school.

"Having enumerated<sup>2</sup>," he now proceeds, "these ten sections and the benefits to be derived from them, I will now explain the reason which induced me to interpret it."

"My persecutors, seeing that I had composed about them a Hebrew book with verse-divisions, points, and accents, began to calumniate and say, 'This is to claim inspiration,' which is simply to ignore what I have said at the *beginning*<sup>3</sup>, since I *start*<sup>4</sup> by saying that prophecy is over. (Two Hebrew fragments are here quoted.) Now he who confesses that it is over cannot himself profess it."

How are we to reconcile this statement with the foregoing analysis of contents? Surely this must have come in section 2. Yet the author states most distinctly that these statements were at the *commencement*.

In the 'scandalous chronicle' the charge is put, it would seem, in the mouth of David b. Zakkai. "He wrote a book aping the Prophets<sup>5</sup>." It must be confessed that Saadyah's answer so far seems sound. The point, however, is to nail Saadyah to the confession that *Prophecy ceased with the Bible*; for this, the Karaites think, is sufficient to discredit the Mishnah. This very argument is adduced by Salmon

<sup>1</sup> P. 159, 16.

<sup>2</sup> P. 161, 12.

<sup>3</sup> في أوله.

<sup>4</sup> قد صدرت.

<sup>5</sup> P. 229.



b. Yerucham<sup>1</sup> in his attack on Saadyah. "What right have men like ourselves, *who are without the Holy Spirit*, to transcribe the Oral Law and make a Law of it? If it existed in the time of the Prophets, it should mention them;" otherwise, it is of no authority.

"They say too 'This book will weaken the hearts of the nation till it make them doubt concerning the twenty-four books, and make them think these equally recent.' But this too is ignorance on their part of the definition of an inspired book: they define it as a book cut up into verses and provided with points and accents; but it is not so; for these operations (I mean the verses [&c.]) can be performed by any one, as did Ben-Sira, and Ben 'Ira, and the Hasmoneids, and the Africans, none of whom professed prophetic power. The true definitions of the prophetic books are three: (1) there must be in them a mention of revelation, either 'God spake' or 'Thus saith the Lord,' &c., or mysterious information as in Proverbs, Koheleth, and the Scroll of Esther; (2) the author of such a book must be proved to be a prophet by a miracle or the testimony of another prophet; (3) the nation must introduce such a book into the number of their sacred books, and hand it down together with them. And if these three conditions be wanting, or one of them be wanting, such a book is no prophecy: how much more then if *none of them be found*, even as they are not found in this book, *nor in Ben-Sira's book*, nor in Ben 'Ira's, and the like? Such a book can by no possibility be called a prophecy."

We have had occasion to notice this passage before; let us suppose for a moment that the passage is genuine and the argument intended to carry conviction. It certainly seems—but this must be left for further development—as if the reason why traditions were not written by Mohammedans and Jews was the fear that such writings might be confused with the Law. When the points and pauses were invented in both cases the danger ceased<sup>2</sup>; the purpose of the Mohammedan pointing was certainly religious, and the Jewish equally certainly so. Now is it really credible that Ben-Sira's book could have been given a traditional pointing, without the Talmud knowing a great deal about the book? But if it was pointed by some editor in Saadyah's time, could Saadyah have ventured to say that Ben-Sira had pointed it? Grant that Saadyah was so anxious to meet the charge of having aped the Prophets that he would have grasped at any straw—why need he make so astounding a misstatement, when he has in any case the book of the people of Kairawan to fall back on? Moreover, we have seen that Saadyah knows nothing of this book in his earlier

<sup>1</sup> Loc. cit., p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> The Mohammedan pausal marks are never used except for the Koran. The vowel points are meant to help foreigners to read the Koran.

writings; we have noticed that the author of Chronicle No. VI in Neubauer's first collection (p. 167) obtains his knowledge of Ecclesiasticus *from the Greek*: and the author of the *Juhasin* does likewise. The former author, according to Neubauer (who gives good reasons for his opinion), lived early in the twelfth century. How is it that the Hebrew Ben-Sira has such a meteoric existence?

Whether Saadyah pointed his *Sefer Ha-Galuy* seems uncertain. It may be that his employment of the third person instead of the first and his use of Biblical phrases was what caused the charge; but the statement that the production of such a book would weaken people's faith in the authority of the canonical books seems somewhat far-fetched, if it be applied to Saadyah's *Apologia pro Vita sua*. If on the other hand the books ridiculed are the Retranslation of Ecclesiasticus and the *Megillath Antiochus*, there is more sense in the charge; for that these might conceivably be mistaken for canonical books we know only too well by recent experience.

The author then<sup>1</sup> proceeds to defend certain expressions which he had used of himself by showing that they are used in the Bible of knaves, idolaters, &c. He had said of himself "And Saadyah supplicated" which they say is an imitation of "And Moses supplicated." But is not the same phrase used in the Bible of an idolater like Jehoahaz, "who did evil in the sight of the Lord"? So with "And Saadyah watched" compare the phrase "Watchers of evil."—Saadyah may have defended himself in this clumsy style; but it is at least as likely that this is a mock defence. The writer shows purposely that the phrases used by Saadyah of himself were used of the worst villains mentioned in Holy Writ.

The next charge<sup>2</sup> is that of tracing his pedigree to Shelah son of Judah, when he had remained "all that length of time" without claiming descent from him. This too was a real charge if the Herem is to be believed.—The answer is that he did not state his pedigree till it was necessary, and in this he followed the example of Benaiah son of Jehoiada, whose pedigree is not given in Samuel or Kings, but who is called High-priest in Chronicles! Now what the Herem declares is that Saadyah was accused of being no Israelite and replied that he was descended from Judah;—surely his defence would rather have been that his Israelitish descent had never been questioned till the dispute arose, when, being accused of being a foreigner, he had explained how he called himself an Israelite. The quibble about Benaiah is evidently in the style of the Gemara; but it may be doubted whether the author could have seriously urged it.

<sup>1</sup> P. 165.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 14.

Next, he says<sup>1</sup> "People ask: 'Why do you praise yourself and assert that God has given you knowledge of beasts, plants, minerals, stars?' &c. The answer is (1) The book is intended for people who do not yet know me. (2) It is to prevent the bystanders reflecting on my services to the nation, lest he who wishes to do harm may not do it, and those who otherwise might be too weak to help may help."

These words probably admit of no other rendering; yet surely they cannot be serious. Saadyah certainly did possess extraordinary knowledge of all the sciences of his time; but he claims omniscience *because he is writing for strangers!* If he had said "for people who have not read my works"; but his ground seems to imply that he is writing for people on whom he can impose! The second ground, of which the original Arabic is given in a note<sup>2</sup>, is yet stranger; if the bystanders do not know him, why should they in any case remember his services to the nation? And why should he wish to prevent them? But if the sentence could by any possibility mean "in order that they may remember," &c., it is difficult to see how his claim of omniscience could effect this. There would seem to be a reference to a miraculous healing which Saadyah either effected or failed to effect, and which caused considerable scandal. "For the same two reasons I have mentioned my piety and straightforwardness: some of the saints in the Old Testament did the same." Viz. because he is writing for those who do not know him!

"Still I only said I had been supplied with *some* wisdom, not with all; then they object to my saying 'and my being answered from on high'—which is a common phrase in our liturgy.

"Then<sup>3</sup> they disapprove of my mutilating my opponents' names—calling David *Yiddod*, Khalaf *Keleb Meth*, &c. Surely they might remember that it is God's way to improve the names of his saints, e.g. Abraham for Abram, and to disfigure the names of evildoers, e.g. Hophra for Pharaoh, Pashhur, meaning 'curtain of ease' into 'terror round about.' Similarly to interpret Zeph. ii. 4 aright our plan must be to divide the names into two: *Ashkelon* becomes *Esh* 'fire' and *Kalon* 'shame,' Ashdod *Esh* 'fire,' and *Yiddod* 'runs away.' These alterations are intricacies of the language which I have imitated in altering my opponents' names."

Derivations of this sort are certainly to be found in the Babylonian Gemara; those of the names Tigris and Euphrates given in *Berachoth*. 59b, are very like the supposed Saadyah's. But the great scholar who wrote the Commentary on the *Sefer Yetsirah* is not likely to have

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>2</sup> إرداعاً للمحاضرين ان يتذكروا انتفاع الأمة بى فلا يسيء المرید الاساءة.

<sup>3</sup> P. 167, 14.

talked seriously in this way. Moreover how can he claim a privilege which according to his own statement is assigned in the Bible to God? Is not this claiming to be a prophet or something higher? The question then is whether Saadyah did lampoon his enemies in this fashion; and without the real *Sefer Ha-Galuy* it is impossible to say. Very small men do resort to this device; J. Leclerc in his answer to Bentley's *Emendations on Menander and Philemon*, called Bentley "Thrasonides," and Burmann "Giton." Dorville in his *Vannus Critica* called de Pauw "Pavo," and was called by his opponent "Orbilius" or "Magistellus"; it is the custom of the Mohammedan satirists to call a man whose name is Abu 'l-Fadl, Abu 'l-Naḡṣ, and the poems of 'Umarah of Yemen, recently edited by M. Derenbourg, offer several examples of this process. My own edition of Sibṭ Ibn Al-Ta'awidhi will contain some more. But has any really great man condescended to such an expedient? The epigram of Joseph Scaliger on a certain Feuardent, whose name he translates literally Pyriphlegethon, is something like this, but in reality far less degrading. The names by which the Jews speak of Christian and Mohammedan objects of reverence, e.g. Kalon for Koran, Maccoth for Meccah, Pasul for Rasul, are partly intended to conceal their meaning. It does not seem to me that the authority of this Preface is sufficient to justify us in crediting Saadyah with so silly a trick, and with so absurd a defence of it<sup>1</sup>.

"I<sup>2</sup> have not undertaken," he proceeds, "to answer every charge brought against my book; this I leave for the place for discussion in the assembly, should it be requisite."—Saadyah was accused of refusing to meet the Karaites at a public discussion. They summoned him to do so, but he declined, according to a writer excerpted by Pinsker (p. 37).

"The conduct of my persecutors in seizing on these trivial phrases in my book, and neglecting its great virtues, was similar to that of Manasseh, king of Judah, in neglecting the miracles, &c. of the Law and picking some trivial holes, as e.g. when he said Moses need not have given the pedigree of the Edomites, nor have told the story of Reuben and the mandrakes." Here again, be it observed, Saadyah falls into his old error of making himself equal to the prophets.

Then follows his answer to Manasseh, king of Judah, who, he says, disgraced himself by such objections. Now the limit between the impossible and the possible is not easy to draw; and therefore the comments that follow may be serious. Yet I cannot believe it. In

<sup>1</sup> In the scandalous Chronicle (227, 9 sqq.) it is evidently David b. Zakkai, not Saadyah, who calls his opponents by fictitious names.

<sup>2</sup> P. 169, 22.

such of Saadyah's comments as are accessible he speaks like a scholar and a man of sound judgment. "Where the text of the Bible and the reason conflict" his principle is "follow the reason." The absurdities that the *Sefer Ha-Galuy* proceeds to adduce in answer to King Manasseh seem more like a satire on the Talmudic style of interpretation than anything that Saadyah could have seriously put on paper<sup>1</sup>.

The genealogies of the Edomites are given for the following reason. Some tribes an Israelite was allowed to rob and murder, others he was not allowed to rob or murder. When therefore he met a man, the Israelite would ask him his pedigree. If the man confessed to belong to one of the doomed tribes, then the Israelite could rob and murder him with a good conscience!—Truly one might have requested Saadyah to consider whether in this case his theory about the text and the reason had not better be applied.

As for the verse, "Reuben went out in the days of the wheat harvest," what we have to learn from that is that mandrakes which you may take are better for you than fruits which you may not take.

Having thus happily defended Moses against the attacks of King Manasseh, recorded in the Babylonian Gemara, the author proceeds to answer some other objections that had been urged against the Penta-teuch. A similar criticism has, he says, been made on what Lamech said to his wives: **כִּי שָׁבַעְתִּים יָקָם קַיִן**. "But I have answered it. Its object is to tell us one of two things. Either that Lamech repented of his sin, in order that we may repent of our sins. In this case we are to interpret the words affirmatively. If multiple vengeance is to be taken on the slayer of Cain, when Cain only slew one man, how much more vengeance shall be taken on Lamech, seeing that he killed *both* a man *and* a child! Consider too that a child cannot possibly have deserved to be killed. If, however, we take the words negatively, then what we learn is that he declares himself innocent of the guilt of Cain. If, he says, merely because Cain repented, though he had committed murder, Cain's murderer shall be punished, certainly some very dreadful punishment will fall on the murderer of Lamech, who has killed neither man nor child! The word child is added to suggest a trivial offence. The word **כִּי** is negative, as in Job vi. 22, where **הֲכִי** is so used."—A noble specimen of exegesis! In explanation (1) we assume that child-murder is a particularly

<sup>1</sup> The passage about King Manasseh occurs B. *Sanhedrin*, 99 b. "Saadyah" plagiarizes in part of this passage from B. *Hullin*, 60 b. The select comments of Saadyah given by Weiss, *ר"י*, IV, pp. 143-145, bear out the above opinion. For Karaite ridicule of the Talmudic exegesis, see Pinsker, *loc. cit.*, p. 18.

heinous form of murder; in explanation (2) we regard it as a peccadillo. Then the founder of Hebrew grammar thinks כִּי can be used for "not," and evidently does not know the meaning of the interrogative particle. But if we look at the real Saadyah's translation of Job, we find he renders the particles there quite correctly and elegantly by *atarā*, "think you?"

Others criticize the author of Deuteronomy for mentioning (iii. 9) that the Sidonians called Hermon Siryon, whereas the Amorites called it S'nir. This is an old difficulty, noticed in B. *Hullin*, 60b, and by Rashi ad loc. The import of the supposed Saadyah's answer is not very clear. Apparently he means, "the Hebrew name Hermon became applied to the whole mountain, so that the part to which it had originally applied could only be identified by comparison with the Sidonian and Amorite names." Thus, e.g. the original Hellas was what (say) the Macedonians call Thessaly; now that the name Hellas has extended all over Greece, if we wish to know what Homer meant by Hellas, let us find out what the Macedonians mean by Thessaly.—That this comment has some merit is clear; but few will guarantee that it is serious.

He then concludes, as is his wont, by boasting of what he has accomplished in this line, especially in his refutation of Huyayy (as I suppose his name should be spelt) of Balkh, "whose book remained (unanswered?) among our people sixty years." But the phrase "whose book remained among our people sixty years" is curious, and must contain some hidden meaning. If these comments be all satirical, we are to infer that Saadyah's refutation of Huyayy was no better than his refutation of King Manasseh.

He is about to commence his translation, but he stops once again to treat us to a few dainty bits from the Hebrew books he has mentioned so often. Seven are quoted from Ben-Sira; in all these something absurd in the phraseology or the thought seems to be ridiculed. (1) v. 6 d, "and upon the wicked shall his might rest," not a very reverent mode to speak of God. "Might" is a mistranslation for "anger." (2) vi. 5, attention is called to the grammatical errors שלומיך and גִּלְיָה<sup>1</sup>. The satire appears most clearly in his quotation of xvi. 15, which, he says, is a warning to people not to think too little of themselves, or consider themselves of too slight importance, which may cause them to sin. He also calls attention to the misuse of the phrase עַם כָּבֵד for "multitude," which in Num. xx. 20 and elsewhere refers to proportional number. The few words that are pointed in these verses are all intended to call attention to something

<sup>1</sup> Compare the letters collected by Pinsker, פ"ב, 25-27, where the wrong insertion of the *yod* is severely criticized.

infelicitous. Why the writer chose nothing more ridiculous than these verses it is not easy to see: perhaps he wished to keep the effect of the supposed Saadyah's exordium to the *Sefer Ha-Galuy* unmarred.

Of Eleazar Ben 'Ira we have spoken already. The second passage from his work is "to show us that the obstinate of mankind can only be broken by severe pounding"! The verses are: "Not by the hand of rocks shall they be broken: for they will soften a sledge-hammer. For the kidneys of wheat are to be pounded with a flail, whereas a wallet of green ears is cut with the hand." His third verse is of the same intellectual calibre, but very much worse in point of grammar. Probably therefore the loss of his writings need cause us no serious regret. Of the Book of the Five Hasmoneids he selects one point only: we are to learn that when a saint invokes God's assistance, he should urge that it is undesirable that the enemy should attribute his success to his idol. In other words, the saint should endeavour to work on the jealousy of the Divine Being!

This article has taken up more room than the subject probably deserves. If the leaflet be after all Saadyah's, then he must come down from the pedestal whereon those who study either his life or his writings would naturally place him. Many bad qualities appear in this Preface—spite, boastfulness, ignorance, meanness, carelessness, stupidity—of good qualities it appears impossible to find one. Since in the opinion of the impartial Mas'udi Saadyah gained a brilliant victory over his opponents, he had not the excuse of the defeated for writing in this style. Whether David b. Zakkai can really have assailed Saadyah with the blackguardism of which the scandalous Chronicle makes him guilty seems also exceedingly doubtful; but it appears from history that David b. Zakkai was in the wrong from the beginning, and was defeated, whence he may perhaps have forgotten the demands of dignity and decorum. However, the character of Saadyah's writings and conduct is the very feeblest of the arguments by which the genuineness of this Preface has been assailed; and if in this case, as in some others, chronology and common sense are to have no voice, I may still fall back on the fact that *Steinschneider expressed some doubts concerning the genuineness of the Preface.*

D. S. MARGOLIOUTH.